

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A steering apparatus for a vehicle, comprising:

a steering shaft supported in a cylindrical housing so that the steering shaft can freely move in an axial direction; and

a nut member screwed onto a screw groove formed in an outer circumference of the steering shaft through a rolling member and rotatably supported in the housing,

wherein steering is performed by transmitting rotation of a motor, which is driven according to steering, to the nut member and converting rotation of the nut member into movement of the steering shaft,

the housing is constructed by coaxially connecting a first housing having an integrally formed fixing section for fastening to a vehicle body with a second housing having a fixing section for fastening to the vehicle body in a separate member,

the first housing connects a pinion housing for supporting a pinion shaft having a pinion for meshing with rack teeth of the steering shaft,

the nut member is supported by a thrust bearing fitted and fixed in the first housing so that the nut member cannot move in both directions along an axial direction, and

a radial bearing is fitted and fixed in the second housing, wherein the nut member is respectively supported at two points along an axis of the nut member by the thrust bearing and the radial bearing,

the thrust bearing comprises a pair of angular ball bearings placed back to back, and
an axis line of the motor is inclined from an axis of the steering shaft toward an axis of the pinion shaft.

2. (original) The steering apparatus for a vehicle as set forth in claim 1, wherein

a transmission section for transmitting power from the motor to the nut member is a gear transmission section comprising a large gear provided on an outer circumferential surface of the nut

member and a small gear which is meshed with the large gear and rotates with power transmission from the motor,

the small gear is fixed to a projecting portion of a transmission shaft supported in a transmission housing loosely fitted into a part of the first housing or the second housing and having a mounting seat for the motor on one side, the projecting portion projecting from the other side of the transmission housing.

3. (original) The steering apparatus for a vehicle as set forth in claim 2, further comprising a mesh adjusting section for adjusting a mesh state of the small gear and large gear by changing a position of the transmission housing in a radial direction within a range of loose fitting clearance between the transmission housing and the first housing or the second housing.

4. (previously presented) The steering apparatus for a vehicle as set forth in claim 3, wherein a transmission housing is loosely fitted and fixed within a motor support cylinder projecting outward from a first housing or the second housing, and an adjustment screw is provided as the mesh adjusting section which is capable of applying an adjusting force to the transmission housing by penetrating a peripheral wall of the motor support cylinder from the outside to the inside thereof so as to move the transmission housing within the motor support cylinder by spiral movement of the adjustment screw.

5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The steering apparatus for a vehicle as set forth in claim 1 [[5]], wherein the angular ball bearings are fixed by a preload nut that is loosely held by a stopper ring.